

Staying home:

A Youth Survey report on young people's experience of homelessness

MISSION
AUSTRALIA

Out of 22,673  Youth Survey 2019 respondents

More than 1 in 6 young people (17%) reported having **an experience of homelessness.**

7% of respondents indicated having **experienced a time when they had no fixed address or lived in a refuge or transitional accommodation** at least once.*

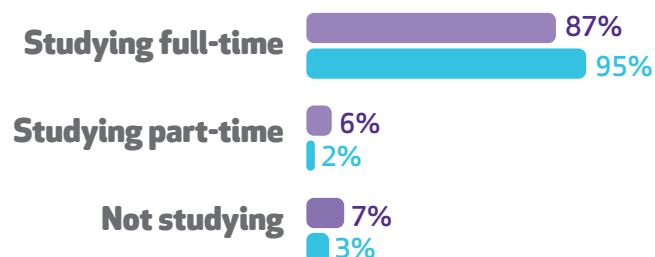
13% of young people reported a **couch surfing experience.***

*Young people were able to report more than one form of homelessness

"Many young people couch surf for long periods with little hope for the future. I really hope this can be changed by reaching out to schools to promote services and ultimately what they can do ..." Female, 18, SA

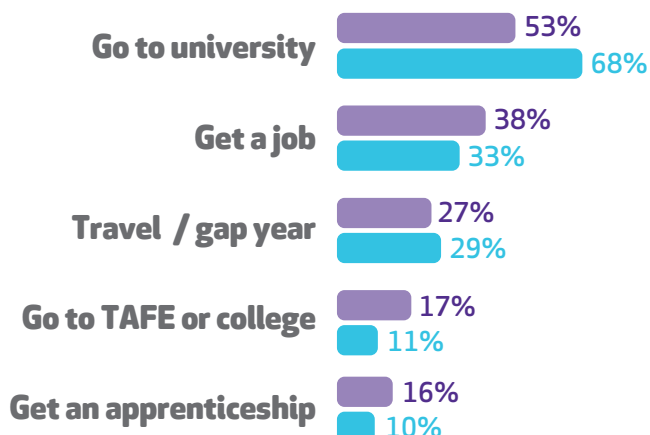
Key differences

Education



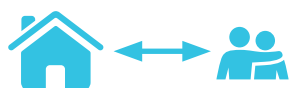
● Experienced homelessness
● Never experienced homelessness

Post school plans



Living arrangements

Young people who have experienced homelessness were more likely to rate their housing as **much less than adequate or less than adequate** in terms of:



distance to your family/friends
23% compared with 11% of young people who have never experienced homelessness



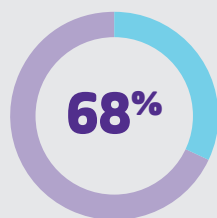
number of bedrooms
12% compared with 4%



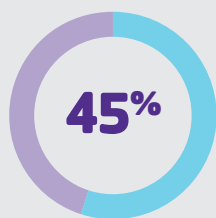
access to services you need
9% compared with 3%

Barriers to post-school goals

Barriers impacting upon the achievement of their post-school goals:



Experienced homelessness



Never experienced homelessness

Top barriers to achieving post-school goals for young people who have experienced homelessness:



mental health 29% compared with 14% of young people who have never experienced homelessness



academic ability 24% compared with 19%



financial difficulties 21% compared with 11%



family responsibilities 17% compared with 6%

"I can't financially support myself and I'm homeless. I'm just breaking really ..." Female, 16, Vic

Personal concerns

Young people who have experienced homelessness were much more concerned about:



family conflict

41% compared with 13% of young people who have never experienced homelessness



mental health

52% compared with 29%



suicide

29% compared with 11%

Support



Young people who have experienced homelessness were less likely than those who have never experienced homelessness to turn to close personal connections for help with important issues, particularly their friend/s (77% compared with 85%), parent/s or guardian/s (54% compared with 81%) and relative/family friend (49% compared with 60%).

A higher proportion of young people who have experienced homelessness indicated they would turn to a community agency (19% compared with 12% of respondents who have never experienced homelessness) or social media (19% compared with 14%) for help.

Bullying

Over 2x the proportion of young people who have experienced homelessness reported that they have been bullied in the past year: 40% compared with 17% of respondents who have never experienced homelessness.

Over 3x the proportion of young people who have experienced homelessness reported that the bullying occurred at home: 33% compared with 10% of respondents who have never experienced homelessness.

"Ensuring kids have somewhere safe to go if there is any sort of violence or ongoing conflict in their house ... and that there is someone who will listen to everyone."

Female, 17, Vic

Family

6x

the proportion of respondents who have experienced homelessness rated their family's ability to get along as poor: 24% compared with 4% of respondents who have never experienced homelessness.

Wellbeing

Almost

4x

the proportion of respondents who have experienced homelessness felt very sad/sad with life as a whole:

27% compared with 7% of respondents who have never experienced homelessness.

Over

2x

the proportion of those who have experienced homelessness indicated some form of psychological distress:

52% compared with 21% of respondents who have never experienced homelessness).

Key policy recommendations

- ✓ **Develop a National Homelessness Plan** with a special focus on young people.
- ✓ **Prevent youth homelessness** by reducing domestic and family violence and family conflict.
- ✓ **Fund youth specific housing options** including Youth Foyers.
- ✓ **Invest in flexible learning models and youth specific employment programs** that support young people experiencing homelessness.
- ✓ **Ensure social security payments are adequate** and do not place young people at risk of homelessness.
- ✓ **Integrate housing and mental health supports** for young people.